

The State of Allied Health in North Carolina

October
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North Carolina Health Professions Data System

An overview of issues and opportunities for the allied health workforce

What is allied health?

Sometimes it's easier to define what allied health is NOT. Typically we think of allied health professionals as anyone in the field other than physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, home health aids and a few others. Allied health professionals participate in all aspects of care including identifying disease, providing technology support, counseling on diet and nutrition, as well as providing rehabilitation services among others.

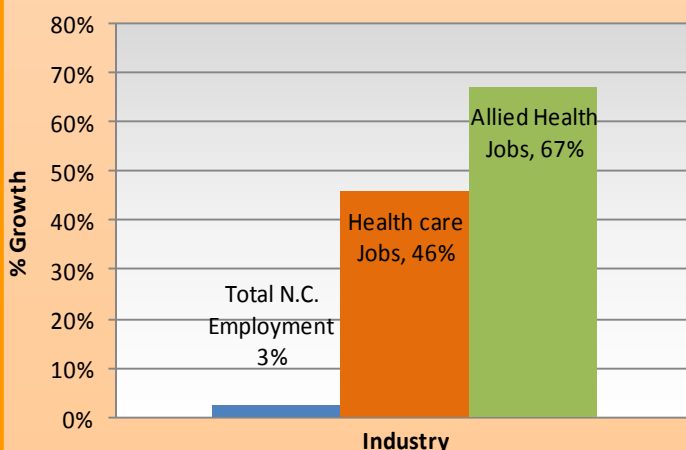
Did you know...?

Allied health is driving growth in the larger health care sector.

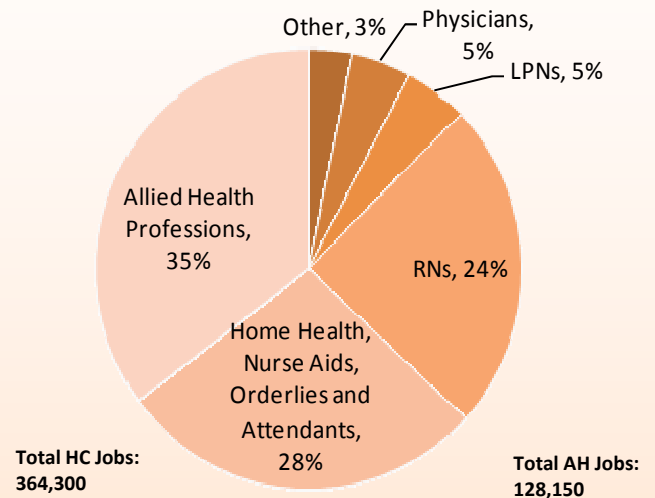
- Between 1999 and 2009, over 44% of job growth in the health care sector was due to growth of allied health jobs.
- Between 2006 and 2016, medical assistants and physical therapy assistants are projected to be in the top 10 fastest growing occupations in North Carolina by percentage change.

The total number of jobs in North Carolina increased 2.5% from 1999-2009 to 3,896,750. During this same period, health care employment grew 46% to 367,320, and within health care, the number of allied health jobs increased by over 67% to 128,150.

Percent Growth in Employment in NC, 1999-2009



Healthcare Jobs in North Carolina, 2009



Note: "Other healthcare occupations" includes chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, and podiatrists.

The challenge to estimate allied health workforce supply

Despite the fact that the demand for allied health workers is strong and expected to grow, state policy makers still struggle with basic questions:

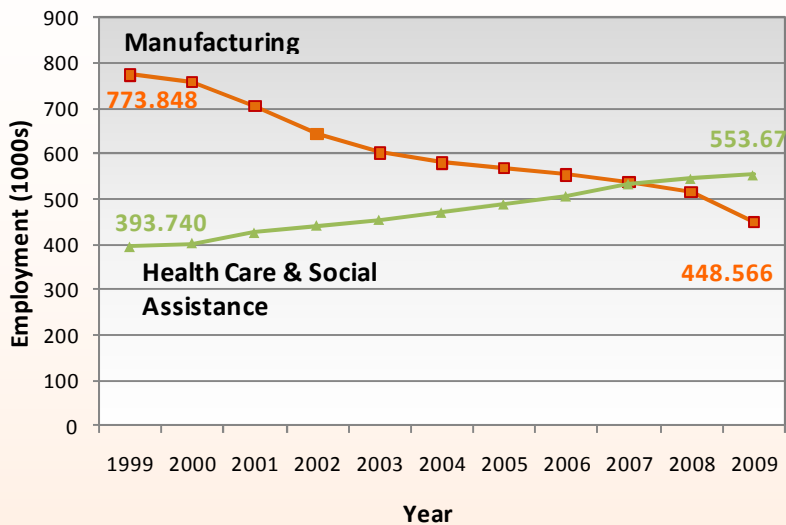
- How many professionals are practicing in the state?
- Is N.C. producing too many, too few, or the right number of professionals to meet the needs of the population?
- How many educational programs are in the state?
- Are the types and locations of educational training programs appropriate?

Because the vast majority of the allied health workforce is not licensed, it is difficult to estimate whether North Carolina's citizens have adequate access to a well-distributed and well-prepared allied health workforce.

Sources: North Carolina Health Professions Data System with data derived from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2009), <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>; accessed 9/15/2010.

North Carolina's economy in transition: 1999-2009

Total Employment in Manufacturing and Health Care and Social Assistance Employment in NC, 1999-2009



As recently as 1999, the manufacturing sector accounted for 21% of jobs statewide and 27% of jobs in rural counties. After almost two decades of plant closings and downsizing, the manufacturing industry now accounts for only 12% of the state's total workforce.

Between 1999 and 2009, rural areas:

- Lost over 130,000 manufacturing jobs
- Gained more than 140,000 jobs in health care and social assistance.

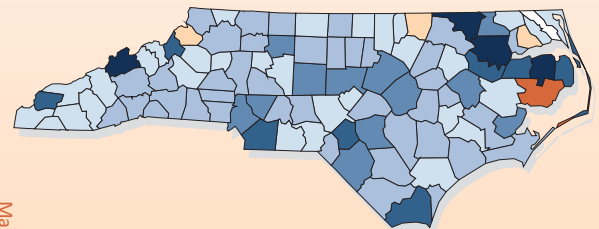
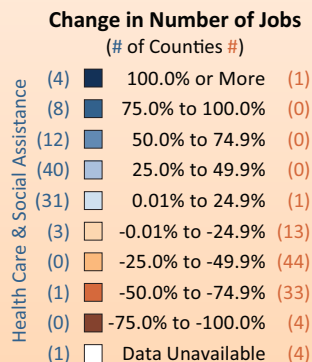
Allied health jobs projected to grow

Allied health is projected to add 35,930 new jobs between 2006 and 2016—a 30.4% increase over 2006 employment.

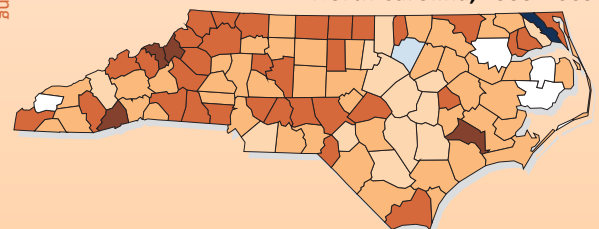
Allied health jobs represent a stable and relatively profitable employment sector, being:

- Relatively less vulnerable to international competition
- More resilient to economic recession
- Not as susceptible to outsourcing trends seen in manufacturing and other sectors.

Percent Change in Number of Health Care & Social Assistance Jobs North Carolina, 1999-2009



Percent Change in Number of Manufacturing Jobs North Carolina, 1999-2009



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Council for Allied Health
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Source: NC Health Professions Data System with data derived from the NC Employment Security Commission, Employment and Wages by Industry, 1998-2008. <http://www.ncesc1.com/lmi/industry/industryMain-NEW.asp>, accessed 6/10/10.